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AUTHOR	Dyson, Anne Haas
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ABSTRACT

Based on an ethnographic study in an urban classroom of 7- to 9-year olds, this book examines how young school children use popular culture, especially superhero stories, in the unofficial peer social world and in the official school literary curriculum. In one sense, the book is about children "writing superheroes"--about children appropriating superhero stories in their fiction writing and dramatic play on the playground and in the classroom. The stories in the book offer children identities as powerful people who do battle against evil and win, but they also reveal limiting ideological assumptions about relations between people--boys and girls, adults and children, people of varied heritages, physical demeanors, and social classes. So that the book is also about children as "writing superheroes." After a preface and an introduction, chapters in the book are: (1) "Studying Children's Social and Textual Lives: Appropriated and Disputed Heroes"; (2) "Orientation: The Children, the Teacher, and the Shifting Social Ground"; (3) "The Ninjas, the Ladies, and the X-Men: Text as Ticket to Play"; (4) "The Blobs and the X-People: New Perspectives on Old Representations"; (5) "The 'Trials and Tribulations' of Emily and Other Media Misses: Text as Dialogic Medium"; (6) "The Coming of Venus Tina: Texts as Markers and Mediators of Tough-Talking Kids"; (7) "Transformed and Silenced Lovers: Texts as Sites of Revelation and Circumvention"; and (8) "The Negotiating Teachers: On Freeing the Children to Write." Contains approximately 200 references. Appendixes present tables; 26 summaries of movies, television shows, and video games; and a 15-item annotated list of figures from Greek myths. (RS)

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